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GHOST RIDER
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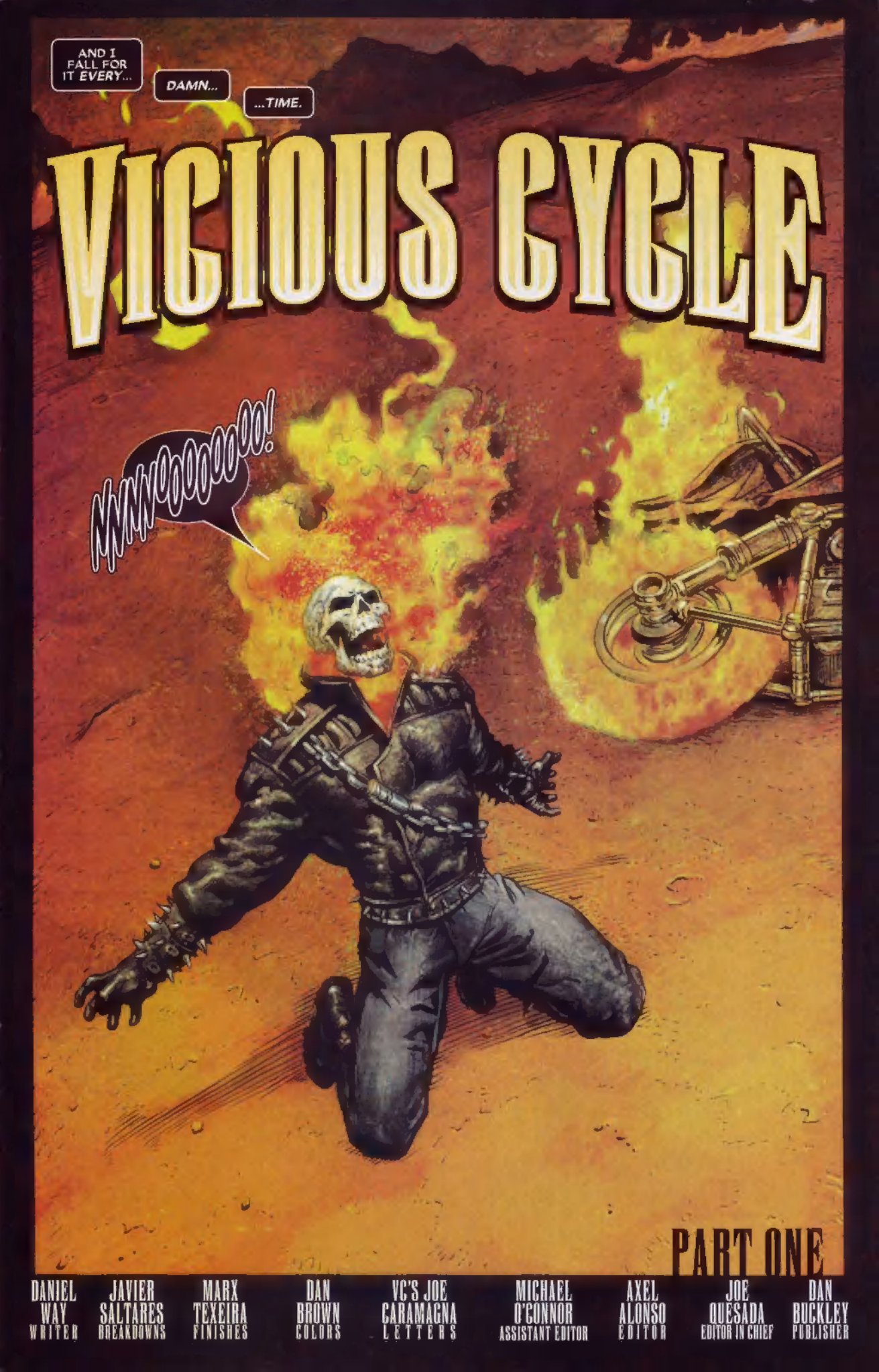
HOPE.
YES...
YES!
IT'S THE DEVIL'S FAVORITE POISON.


AND I FALL FOR IT EVERY...
DAMN...
...TIME.
VICIOUS CYCLE
NNNOOOOOOO!
PART ONE
DANIEL WAY WRITER
JAVIER SALTARES BREAKDOWNS
MARX TEXEIRA FINISHES
DAN BROWN COLORS
VC'S JOE CARAMAGNA LETTERS
MICHAEL O'CONNOR ASSISTANT EDITOR
AXEL ALONSO EDITOR
JOE QUESADA EDITOR IN CHIEF
DAN BUCKLEY PUBLISHER

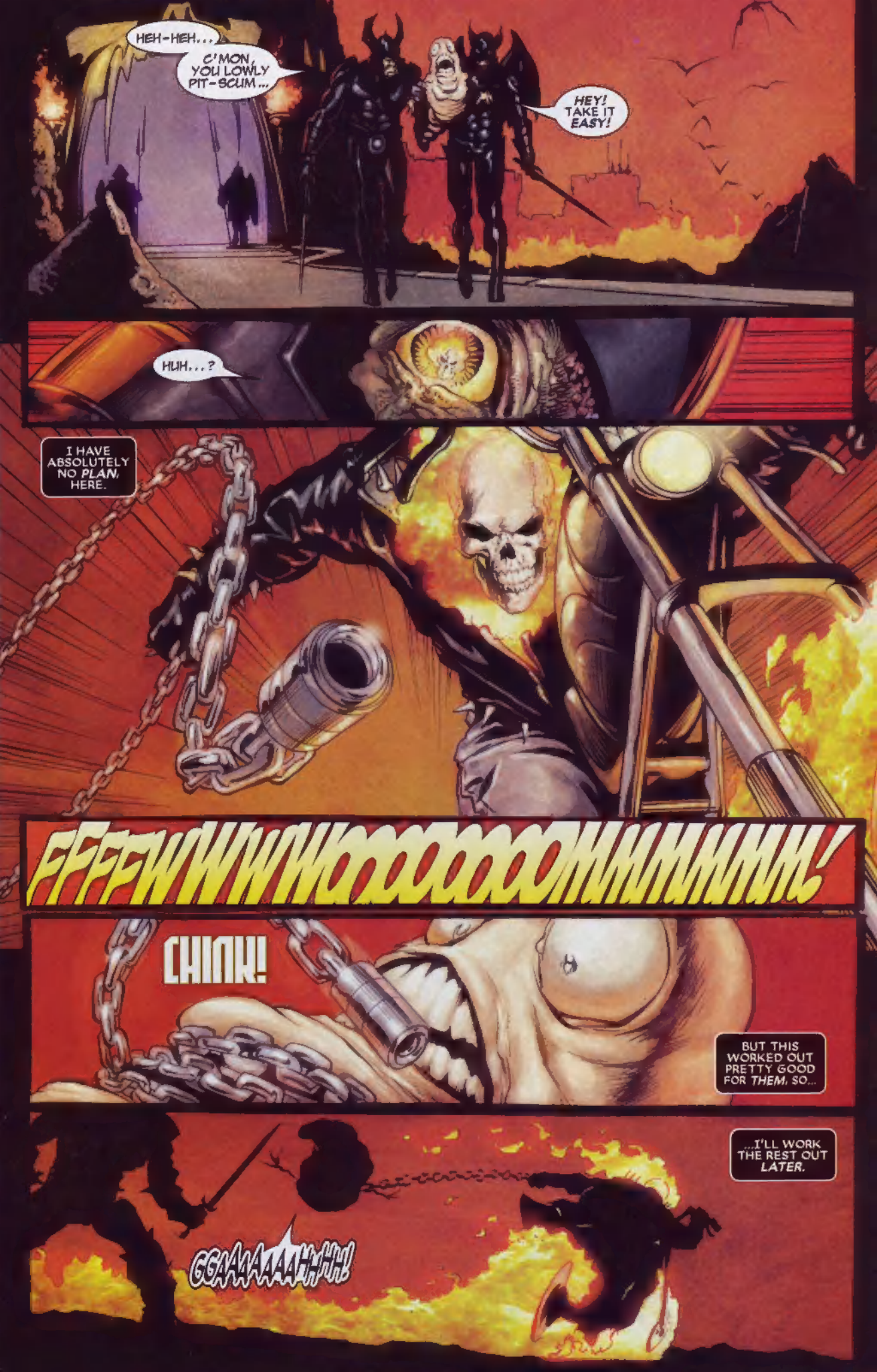
MY LORD, TO WITNESS YOUR GREATNESS IS A BLESSING--AND YET ALSO A CURSE--
--TO KNOW THAT ONE SUCH AS MYSELF COULD NEVER HOPE TO ACHIEVE SUCH PERFECTION.
YES, WELL...
...I DO TAKE GREAT PLEASURE IN MY WORK.
OF COURSE YOU DO, MY LORD...AS WELL YOU SHOULD.
AND MAY I ALSO SAY, MY LORD, THAT YOUR MANIPULATION OF THE GHOST RIDER IS MASTERFUL...TRULY MASTERFUL.
I TIRE OF YOUR WITLESS FAWNING.
I AM WELL AWARE OF MY SUPERIORITY, ESPECIALLY IN MATTERS OF MANIPULATION.
I MUST ADMIT, HOWEVER, IN THE CASE OF THE GHOST RIDER IN PARTICULAR...
WELL...

"...I DO KNOW JUST HOW TO PULL HIS STRINGS."
FACE IT, JOHNNY...
...YOU'RE NEVER GETTING OUT OF HELL.
THE DEVIL WON.
HE BEAT YOU.
NO!
I'M NOT BEATEN.
I'M NOT DONE--
KRAKOOM
YET...?
HHHEEEEEEEEE--!?

*HLGK!
ENJOYING THE *SHOW*, YOU SICK LITTLE FREAK?
NO--NO-- PLEASE--!
I'M *NOT*--!
NOT *WHAT*?
NOT HERE TO WITNESS MY PAIN AND SUFFERING AND REPORT BACK TO YOUR MASTER ALL ABOUT IT? SO THAT HE CAN HAVE A GOOD LAUGH?
WELL, TELL HIM THIS, DEMON: TELL HIM TO GO--
NO, I'M N--
--URGK!
I W-WASN'T *SPYING* ON YOU! I-I GOT LOST!
I...OH, MAN--*OH, NO!*
PLEASE-- *PLEASE HELP ME!*
HELP YOU...?
THEY'RE COMING!
GOOD.
LET 'EM COME.
I'M SICK OF RUNNING.

WHAT--?
SAVE ME! SAVE ME, PLEASE!
SAVE ME AND I'LL--
THEY'RE NOT AFTER ME...
PIW WA AAG H!
...THEY'RE AFTER HIM.
BUT WHY?
I'LL TAKE YOU WITH ME!
I CAN DIG US OUTTA HEEEEERE!
HOPE.

LORD SATAN!
THE ESCAPEE HAS BEEN CAPTURED, MY LORD.
GREEXIX, GREEXIX, GREEXIX...
...YOU PUTRID, DISGUSTING SLUG.
IF YOU HAD SIMPLY TOLD ME THAT YOU NO LONGER WISHED TO SERVE IN THE PIT, I WOULD'VE GLADLY RELOCATED YOU.
BUT INSTEAD, YOU RAN AWAY.
I-I-I...I'M SORRY, LORD SATAN. I--
NO, GREEXIX, I DON'T THINK YOU TRULY ARE SORRY...
BUT YOU WILL BE...


HEH-HEH...
C'MON, YOU LOWLY PIT-SCUM...
HEY! TAKE IT EASY!
HUH...?
I HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO PLAN, HERE.
FFFFWWWWOOOOOOOOMMMMMMM!
CHINK!
BUT THIS WORKED OUT PRETTY GOOD FOR THEM, SO...
...I'LL WORK THE REST OUT LATER.
GGAAAAAAH-HH!

C'MON, JOHNNY... THINK!
AAAAAHHHH!
KKKRRRRRRRRKK..!
IT'S...IT'S YOU!
Y-YOU SAVED ME!
...DID YOU SAVE ME?
NO.
NOT YET.

WWWWoooooohhhh!

KABOOOM!
HNNNGG...
DAMN.
ALL THAT DID WAS BUY US TIME--THEY'RE ALREADY MAKING THEIR WAY AROUND.
LOOK AROUND...DO YOU SEE SOME MOUNTAINS?
YEAH.
OKAY...YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO SEE A CAVE. IT'S RIGHT--
I SEE IT.
LET'S ROLL, TUBBY.

WELL, NO... NO, *ME NEITHER*, BUT...
...HE USES IT *AGAINST* US, OKAY? *LUCIFER*, I MEAN. *DECEPTION*--THAT'S HIS *POWER*. THAT'S HIS *ONLY* POWER.
I MEAN, HE'S NOT *GOD*, YOU KNOW?
THAT'S WHY HE *USES* PEOPLE TO GET WHAT HE *WANTS*--IT'S BECAUSE HE CAN'T GET IT *HIMSELF*.
PEOPLE LIKE *ME*.
HE'S HAD ME DOWN IN THE PIT FOR...MAN, I CAN'T EVEN *REMEMBER* HOW LONG I'VE BEEN DOWN THERE.
HE MADE ME *DIG*, EXPANDING IT AND MAKING IT *DEEPER* SO THAT HE COULD FIT MORE *SOULS* DOWN IN THERE.
ONE DAY, I JUST COULDN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE, SO I *ESCAPED*. I DUG MY WAY OUTTA THERE.
AND THAT'S WHEN I *FOUND* IT:
WATER.
BUT...
THERE'S NO *WATER* IN...
EXACTLY.
I TRIED TO FOLLOW IT, BUT I GOT *LOST*--MY *EYES*...
BUT YOU'RE GONNA HELP ME OUT, RIGHT? SO WE CAN *BOTH* ESCAPE?
YEAH.
NO.
YOU'RE A *DEMON*. YOU'RE IN HELL BECAUSE YOU *DESERVE* TO BE IN HELL.
PROMISE?
AND THAT'S WHY I DON'T FEEL THE LEAST BIT GUILTY ABOUT *LYING* TO YOU.

GHOST RIDER

Here we are, Flameheads! I hope you brought your marshmallows, because things are about to get hot around here. Ghost Rider has broken out of [development] Hell and into his first ongoing series in nearly a decade and he has his fans to thank for it!

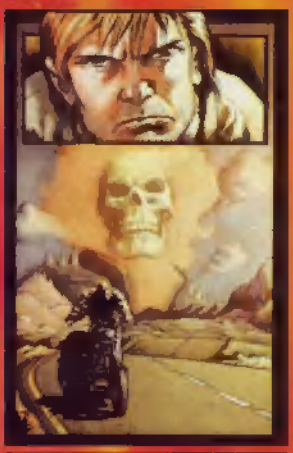
The overwhelming success of the GHOST RIDER: ROAD TO DAMNATION limited series by Garth Ennis and Clayton Crain paved the road. We were inundated by letters from you, the fans of Ol' Flamehead, thanking Marvel for bringing back their favorite character in a rollercoaster ride of action, horror, and twisted black humor. The only bit of disappointment that leaked out in your ebullient letters? That a character as big as Ghost Rider was being squeezed into a limited series, when he clearly deserved an ongoing monthly.

Well, folks, as you can tell from this issue, the first in a brand-new ongoing, you convinced us.

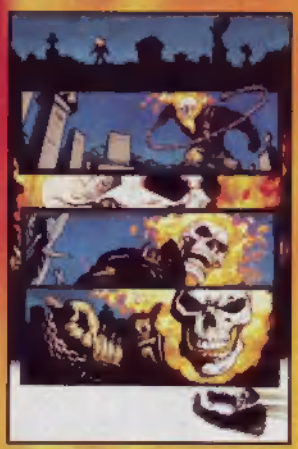
The trick, however, was finding a creative team that would respect the character and create a story just as compelling and exciting as the GHOST RIDER miniseries. That's where we really lucked out. Daniel Way of WOLVERINE: ORIGINS fame had a great concept for an ongoing book that placed Ghost Rider right in the middle of the Marvel Universe, pitted him against his greatest foe--Lucifer--and added a wicked twist to his mythology that would tee up years of stories. We loved it. Luckily, so did Mark Texeira and Javier Saltares--as you can tell from the issue you're holding in your hands (and no other artist team in comics could make a guy with a flaming skull look this good!). Add to the mix PUNISHER colorist Dan Brown and ROAD TO DAMNATION letterer Joe Caramagna and our luck was running on all cylinders.

However, the final part of any great comic book is you, the reader. You guys and gals reanimated our biker from Hell and his continued existence lies in your capable hands. So write in and let us know what we're doing right and wrong, which Ghost Rider you love best (Johnny, Danny?), and how devoted a Flamehead you really are. Anyone got some Ghosty tattoos, props, or customized choppers? If so, we want to see them!

--Michael



AND TO SPARK YOUR APPETITE, HERE ARE A FEW PREVIEW PAGES FROM NEXT ISSUE:



Lucifer set loose on Earth?! The return of Johnny Blaze?! Hang on for the ride of your life, True Believer!

MICHAEL O'CONNOR ASSISTANT EDITOR
AXEL ALONSO EDITOR
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E-MAIL: SPIDEYOFFICE@MARVEL.COM
MARK E-MAIL

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